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AUTHOR Amodeo, Luiza B.; Flores, Laura J.
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ABSTRACT

As early as 1958, respected educators pointed out that: traditional methods (standardized IQ tests, teacher recommendations, parent questionnaires) did not identify minority/culturally diverse children; the concept of gifted needed to include creativity; and creativity could be a strength of minority children. During the late 1960's in response to pressure from minorities, there was a resurgence of interest in creativity of minorities. Paul Torrance stressed the importance of the creativity of minority/culturally diverse children, early identification, and the need for understanding the types of giftedness valued by each minority group. In 1973, six types of giftedness were identified: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative and productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor ability. Torrance noted that while the first category would continue to screen out minority children, the last five, if implemented, would give them entry into gifted talented programs. Current research supports Torrance. In 1978, Joyce Gay described 11 characteristics of gifted children from the literature and made some generalizations of how these characteristics are manifested in black children, e.g., keen observation, interest and ability in perceiving relationships, verbal proficiency, possessing good judgment, and creativity. These characteristics can be extended to fit Chicano and other minority children. (NQA)

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EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF MINORITY GIFTED:

THE STATE OF THE ART

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LUIZA B. AMODEO, Ph.D.
Department Head
New Mexico State University
College of Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Box 3AC
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

LAURA J. FLORES
Bilingual Fellow
New Mexico State University
College of Education
Department of Educational Specialties
Box 3AC
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

Texas Association for Bilingual Educators
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During the 60's while I was attending a California University there was a spirit of excitement and enthusiasm among prospective teachers about working in gifted programs. Most of us didn't give a thought to the equity of representation in those gifted classrooms. During scheduled student observations and later as a teacher in the school I became very aware of the overwhelming whiteness of the gifted classes. Realistically in any given population 5% would fall into the gifted category according to a normal distribution curve. The 5% of minority gifted were not to be found in the gifted classrooms of California.

Shortly after I started teaching, California abandoned its financial support for gifted programs and only those districts under pressure from parent groups continued to offer special classes for gifted children.

Nationally, little interest was generated about identification of gifted minority although respected educators first began to speak about the rich talents to be found in minority groups as early as 1958. They pointed out that traditional methods did not identify minority or culturally diverse children; that the concept of gifted needed to be broadened to include creativity; and that creativity could be one of the strengths of minority/culturally diverse children.

Paul Torrance emerged as a major advocate in 1968 when he addressed the National Association for Gifted Children. He stressed the importance of the creativity of minority/culturally diverse children and said:

> "I am especially hesitant to express the most persistent and urgent of the implications that have possessed me. For some time, I have been experiencing a dawning realization that in the future we shall have to depend upon creatively gifted members of disadvantaged and minority cultures for most of our creative achievements. In a way, this may have been true all along. To be a part of the advantaged, dominant culture, a person frequently has to sacrifice too much of a creative contribution. Our creative achievers will be those who accept only those parts of the dominant culture which are true and who hold onto their individuality and their minority or disadvantaged children. It will be they who possess the "different" element, the "divine discontent," and the clearness of vision to see that "the king wears no clothes." (p. 294)

During the late 60's in response to pressure from minorities, there was a resurgence of interest in creativity of minorities. Torrance (1969a; 1969b) was, again, in the forefront repeating his themes on the importance of early identification and the need for understanding the types of giftedness that are valued by each minority group.

Torrance (1970) argued that in "searching for gifted individuals among disadvantaged populations, you are likely to have better success if you seek them in... (other) than traditional ways." (p. 201). And that we "seek those types of giftedness that are highly valued by the particular disadvantaged subculture." (p. 295). Torrance has suggested a list of 18 "creative positives" which he has found to exist to high degrees in disadvantaged children and upon which successful educational programs can be built and the potentialities of the children can be put to optimal use. His creative positives include:

1. Ability to express feelings
2. Ability to improvise with common-place materials
3. Articulate in role playing, creative activities
4. Enjoyment and ability in art, drawing, painting, etc.
5. Enjoyment and ability in creative dramatics, dance, etc.
6. Enjoyment and ability in music
7. Expressiveness in speech
8. Fluency and flexibility in nonverbal media
9. Enjoyment and skills in group learning and problem solving
10. Responsiveness to the concrete
11. Responsiveness to the kinesthetic
12. Expressiveness of gestures, "body language," etc.
13. Humor
14. Richness of imagery in informal language
15. Originality of ideas in problem solving, brainstorming
16. Problem - Centeredness
17. Emotional responsiveness
18. Quickness of warm-up

Traditional methods of identification of gifted children have included standardized IQ tests, teacher recommendations and parent questionnaires, either singly or in some combination.

For identification of gifted minority students we know that these methods along are not acceptable. Standardized IQ tests have been shown time and again

to be biased against minority/disadvantaged children because they have been standardized on the dominant, white, middle-class culture.

Teachers tend to recommend for inclusion in gifted programs those children who are the best behaved and well dressed of their students. Again many minority gifted children, especially those from low-socioeconomic backgrounds will not fit into these categories.

The difficulty with parent questionnaires is that many cultures believe that placing a child in a gifted program would be boasting and that modesty and the needs of the group take precedence over those of the individual. Language differences, mistrust of, or feelings of inferiority towards the possibly more highly educated school personnel administering the questionnaire may cause difficulties in the parents willingness to answer questionnaires.

In 1973, the National State Leadership Training Institutes for the Gifted and Talented held a series of conferences on minority gifted. Six types of giftedness were identified:

1. general intellectual ability
2. specific academic aptitude
3. creative and productive thinking
4. leadership ability
5. visual and performing arts
6. psychomotor ability

Torrance (1978) noted that while the first category would continue to screen out minority children, the last five, if implemented, would give minority gifted children entry into gifted talented programs.

Since 1973, gifted programs have increased; however, only within the last five years has there been a surge of programs for gifted minority children. It appears that a general dependence on the use of psychometric test scores for identification still continues and Paul Torrance persists, despite criticism, - to suggest other means of identification.

Current research would seem to support Torrance. Joyce Gay in 1978 proposed a plan for the identification of black gifted children. She observed that black

gifted children share common characteristics with other gifted children but there are differences in the manifestations of some of the characteristics. Based on her experience as a teacher of black children for 20 years she devised a comparative list of manifestations of giftedness. According to Gay's plan for identification of black gifted students, heavy weight would be placed on the results of the Torrance test of Creative Thinking.

Joyce Gay listed descriptions of characteristics of gifted children and youth from the literature and made some generalization of how these characteristics are manifested in Black children. We believe these can be extended to include other minority children besides blacks.

Concept from the Literature	Manifestations of Gifted Characteristics in Gifted Black Children
1. Keen observation	Picks up more quickly on racist attitudes and practices; may feel alienated by school at an early age;
2. Interest and ability in perceiving relationships	Seeks structure and organization in required tasks; may be slow to motivate in some abstract activities;
3. Verbal proficiency, large vocabulary, facility of expression	Many black children have large vocabularies inappropriate for school setting; thinking in Black English may hinder the facility of expression in standard English;
4. Breadth of Information	Difficult to determine many areas of experiential knowledge for Black Children;
5. Questioning, curious, skeptical	Though some ask too many "wrong" questions some may have been conditioned to suppress questioning behavior;
6. Critical, evaluative, possessing good judgment	Explores (in perception of relationships) better or wiser choices; reads behavioral implications;
7. Creative, inventive, original	Makes up games and activities; expresses original ideas in other ways;
8. Power of concentration, long attention span	May find some have extremely strong concentration due to persistent noise in environment; may also express displeasure at having to stop an activity;

9.	Independence	Need for less supervision especially pronounced in Black gifted;
10.	Diversity of interests and abilities	Frequently has artistic, musical, creative writing, psychomotor or leadership talent in addition to global intellectual ability, may neglect school work due to other interests;
11.	Academic facility and strength	Good at basic school tasks, may not have expected achievement due to inferior schooling. (Gay, pp. 354-355)

Recent Research

In 1971, Snow asserted that the identification of gifted and talented is a problem at any time and yet is much greater when two widely dissimilar cultures are involved. Snow was involved in research with Navajo children and he pointed out that when one culture has a different language, religion, life style and view of the world the identification of gifted is further complicated. He noted that the language and way of thinking of the Navajo is very different from that of Anglos particularly in certain abstract and conceptual cognitive modes.

Catherine Bruch in 1975 offered suggestions for measuring creativity in the culturally different students. She referred to the study by Bernal and Reyna in which they researched the creative abilities valued by the Mexican American gifted students. Bruch also maintained that creative style qualities such as problem solving, persistence, flexibility, risk-taking, playfulness, humor, with special attention to creative use of language could be observed and measured for idenitification purposes.

Asking the question, "What Makes Giftedness?" Renzulli, in 1978, analyzed data on giftedness and proposed a new definition of giftedness. He included a cluster of traits that had been lumped together under the label "creativity."

Passow and Tannenbaum suggested in 1978 that the use of standardized tests does not help in identifying potential poets. Rather a program of instruction and practice in creative poetic expression would enable children with poetic

abilities to reveal themselves.

In a 1980 study, researchers Chambers, Barron and Sprecher examined a method for identifying Mexican-American children. They presented evidence that many states use student's I.Q. scores for admission to gifted programs. The authors noted that the use of I.Q. scores implies that giftedness is the demonstration of high level convergent thinking abilities. This assumption must be questioned especially in view of the penalties such culturally loaded verbal devices place on culturally diverse students. Using the Wallach-Kogan Tests of Creativity, along with other tests and teacher ratings, the researchers were able to identify a substantial number of Mexican American children with potential for future contributions of a high intellectual/creative nature.

More recently in January 1981, Colangelo and Lafrenz noted that counselors are playing a much more active role in assessing and identifying the gifted. They stressed the importance of using all of the six categories, previously presented, in the identification of the culturally diverse gifted students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Identification of gifted minority children cannot and should not be limited to tests of intelligence. "A variety of techinques, procedures, and instruments ...might be used... It is the creation of pupil products which contributes of self-identification and since product development is a continuous one, identification is also seen as a continuous process rather than a single-event test administration." (Passow, p. 9)

Sisk in 1980 recommended that gifted programs must be integrated if they are to survive. Educators need to recognize the importance of involving minority members in working with minority groups in identifying and developing talent.

Even though as Zettel (1979) reported there are a number of national, state and local advocacy groups, more are needed to lobby for quality programs for every gifted and talented student in the United States.

Extension of Characteristics
to fit Chicano Children

1. Same for Chicano children as for Black children.

2. Castaneda's and Ramirez's research on cognitive styles would suggest that Chicanos are more often left-hemisphere dominant.

3. Because schools are geared to English speaking students, native Spanish speakers may experience difficulties.

4. Little information is available because of incongruent value systems.

5. Same for Chicano children.

6. More value placed by Chicano children on relationships, especially family and highly attuned to body language.

7. Same.

8. Depending on individual cases, this could be true.

9. There are some sex differences for Chicano children.

10. Same.

11. Same.

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